

The Washington Post _____
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 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The Christian Science Monitor _____
 New York Daily News _____
 USA Today _____
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 ST. LOUIS POST 18
 Date 10 JUN 89

Webster Sees No Indication Of Civil War

By Mark Schlinkmann
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

CIA DIRECTOR William H. Webster said Friday that the United States had no "real indication" that a civil war between rival factions of the Chinese Army might break out.

"We in the intelligence community never subscribed to that theory at this time," Webster said in an interview here. "I think there is no real indication that major sections of the army are defecting."

Clearly, he said, differences exist within the Chinese army over the quashing of pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing.

"Many of the soldiers did not want to participate in the brutal activity that took place [while] others were less concerned about it or were under more iron control," Webster said.

But Webster said "we really don't know" about the accuracy of reports earlier this week of fighting between some soldiers.

And any such encounters, he said, were not of the dimension "that would suggest that soldiers under their leaders were prepared to turn on other soldiers."

He said the phrase "civil war" was used "too early, too soon, without clearly identifying the nature of the apparent skirmishes."

Webster, a former St. Louisan, was interviewed after speaking at the graduation ceremony at St. Louis Country Day School, 425 North Warson Road, in Ladue.

Although "the forces of repression" have retaken control in China "in an iron way," Webster said, he doubted that the desire for change carried by the student demonstrators would die.

He said students were carrying the message of the carnage in Tiananmen Square to cities and villages across China.

"We saw courage on the one hand and massive brutality on the



William H. Webster
Speaks at school here

other," Webster said in his speech. "A new birth of freedom has been denied for the moment, but it is there waiting to be claimed."

But Webster said U.S. officials did not know with certainty the status of Zhao Ziyang, the Communist Party's general secretary who was reported to be ousted for taking too conciliatory a stand with the demonstrators.

"There's not a strong base for people to rally around, and that will take time to develop," Webster said.

Webster said U.S. officials have much to find out about the situation and that only "bits and pieces" of information have emerged through human, electronic and satellite intelligence sources and through news media accounts.

He said President George Bush's policy was designed to "express our disapproval of that kind of brutality" and to "provide assistance and encouragement to those who are seeking freedom in peaceful ways."

He added, "There are a lot of things that are unfolding. You don't want to make snap judgments."

Webster urged Country Day graduates to get involved in public service, especially on the local level, and said "in a democracy, liberty and freedom is not imposed from above. It springs upward from communities."

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Sat Jun 10 01:09:37 1989

CIA DIRECTOR SAYS CIVIL WAR IN CHINA WAS NOT IMMINENT

ST. LOUIS, Reuter - CIA Director William H. Webster was quoted Saturday as saying that U.S. intelligence officials never believed that a civil war involving Chinese Army units was imminent.

"We in the intelligence community never subscribed to that theory at this time" Webster said in an interview with the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

"I think there is no real indication that major sections of the army are defecting."

Webster told the newspaper that differences existed within the Chinese Army over the handling of the demonstrations in Beijing, but any infighting among soldiers was not of the seriousness that "would suggest that soldiers under their leaders were prepared to turn on other soldiers."

He said the phrase "civil war" was used "too early, too soon, without clearly identifying the nature of the apparent skirmishes."

Diplomats estimate several thousand people have been killed in a crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators last weekend, but the Chinese authorities say that fewer than 300 died, nearly all of them troops.

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